SPAWN

THE DARK AGES

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16

DIGITAL EDITION

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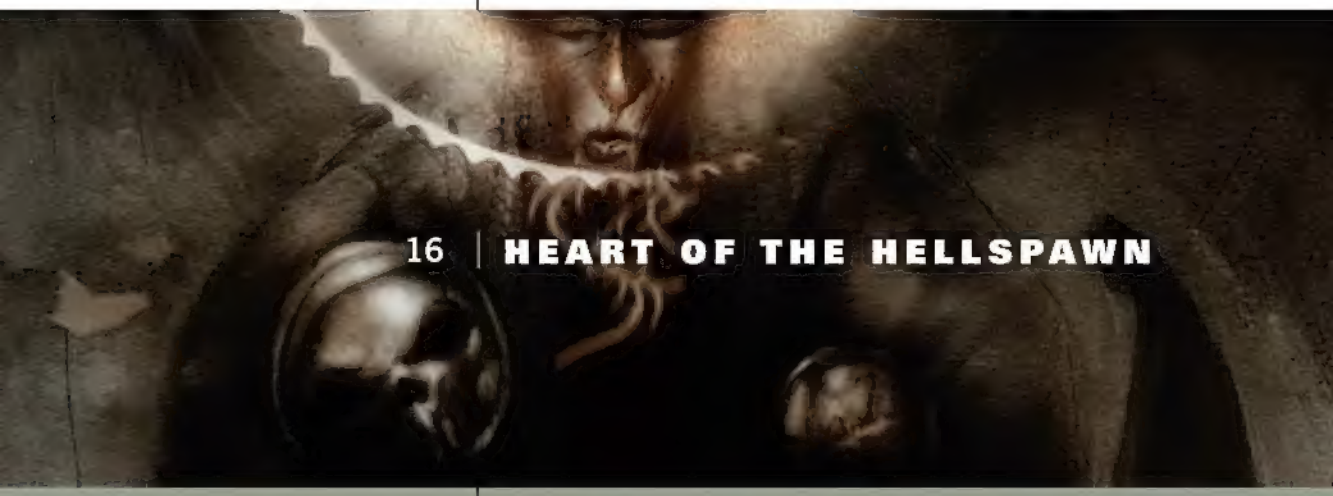

16 | HEART OF THE HELLSPAWN

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SPAWN THE DARK AGES 15 SUMMARY

In his effort to once again become a man, Covenant is complacent in the town of Rhyll where he is revered by the town's residents as their protector. One night, Covenant has a tortured sleep filled with nightmares of savage death and destruction. When he awakes, he finds that his nightmare has become real. The townspeople have been mercilessly slaughtered, and those few who have survived the carnage point to Covenant as the murderer. Cog tells the Hellspawn that by trying to recapture his humanity, he has fallen into a trap set by Malebolgia, but Covenant doesn't trust or believe the old man.

SPAWN CREATED BY
TODD McFARLANE

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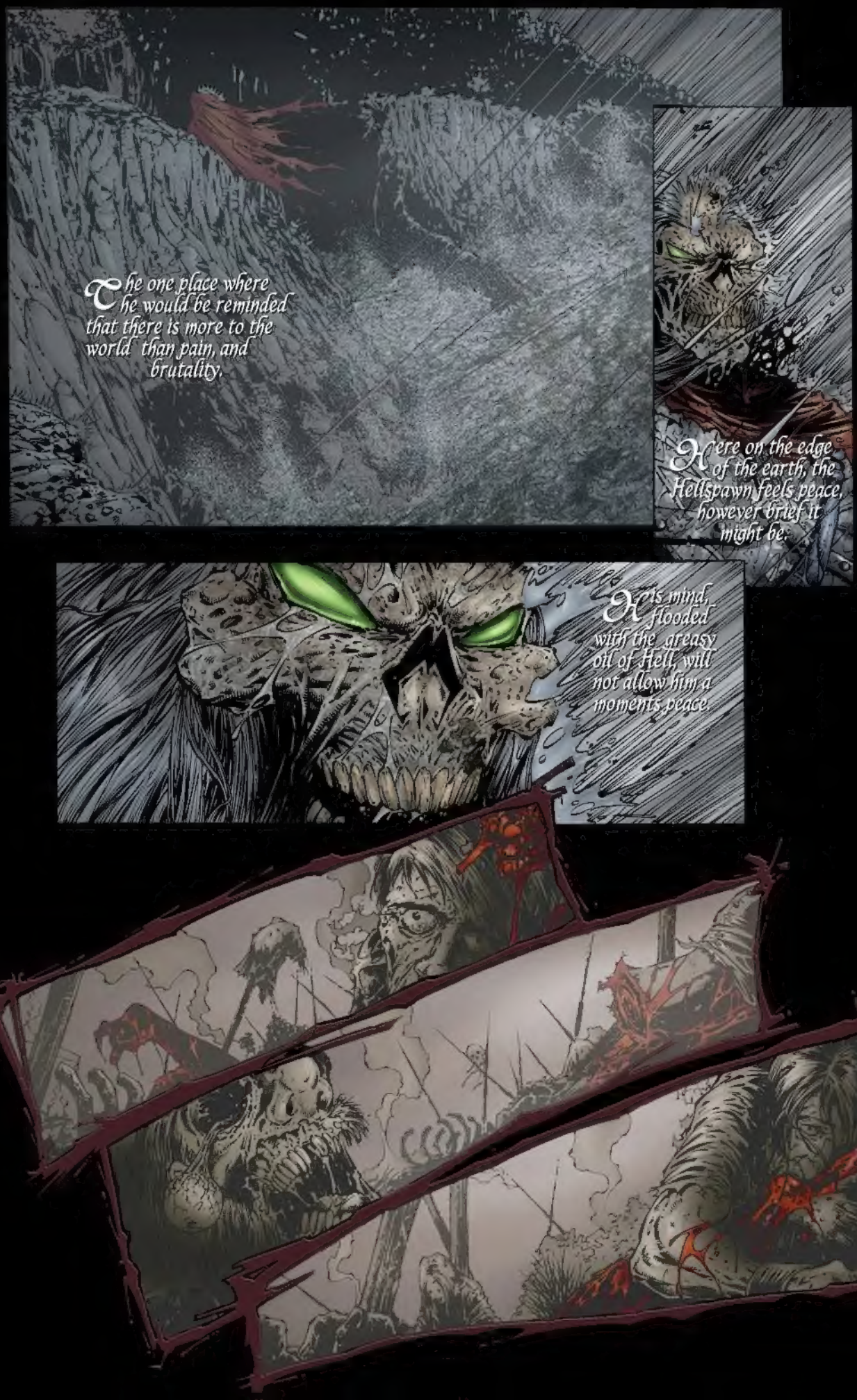
What value is a man's heart if he does not own his soul?
Four hundred years have passed and the War continues, tearing apart lives, souls and hearts without a moments consideration for this.
All that is of concern is that the army is nurtured and the hungry mouth of the battle is fed. Fed on gore and despair and tears.
It does not matter that blood is spilled like rivers. It does not matter that innocents are snapped like twigs.
Nothing matters as long as the indestructible souls are gathered and divided and pitted against one another on a dimension of raw pain and selfish hunger for domination.
The world is the playground of selfish Gods and uncaring Devils. Why should the concerns of the human heart be taken into consideration?

Let alone, the heart of a Hellspawn.
He has traveled hundreds of miles since being run from his village. He has crossed forests and mountains, and bogs so thick with rotten earth that he hardly dared cross.
But finally he has come to the site he had visited in life. Now he sought to see it once again in death.


The one place where he would be reminded that there is more to the world than pain, and brutality.
Here on the edge of the earth, the Hellspawn feels peace, however brief it might be.
His mind, flooded with the greasy oil of Hell, will not allow him a moments peace.

Why have you forsaken me?! Did I not kill in your name?! Did I not right the wrongs of heathen oppression?!
Why do I stand here, years after my own mortal death, with the blood of innocents on my hands?
My God, what game is this you play?
Are you listening? Any of you?
Damn you! Are you hearing me? Are you hearing my words?!

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I want no part of you, of this... this game you so callously call a war!
I won't let you take any more from me! Are you listening?!
I won't let you have my heart which you have tortured and tormented beyond reason!
I won't let you have it!

Many have tried, each in their own pathetic way, to turn away from the powers of Heaven and Hell.

I won't let you have my heart.

This Hellspawn believes he is the first.

He is wrong.
Of the hundreds of millions of the souls that have been harvested and nurtured and raked over the embers, only a handful have escaped enrollment into either faction of the endless, secret war.

No.
And of that handful, only three have lived to tell the tale.
What is this madness!?
And of those three, only one Lost Soul walks the earth with his flesh still living on his bones.
Escaping the power of the darkness and light is a rare and precious occurrence on the road of human life.
This will not be the day for this Hellspawn. Not here. Not now. And not by his own hand.
On this day, as he faced the storm, Covenant made a bold step toward freedom, only to learn the answer he already knew...
...in his heart.
There is no escape.

Iain?
Who?
A voice from the past like a razor against his spine, but who would venture to this barren region?
You! It can not be!
Shiann! It can not be. You are dead. Word came to me that you died while giving birth to my child.
You of all should know that death is but another dimension for which there can be escape.
You have returned to me?
No.
I heard you speak to the winds, and I've come to tell you that it is not the powers who have forsaken you, my love. It is you who have forsaken all that you stood for in life. It is you who have given yourself over to the darkness.

I do not understand. What does this mean?
It means nothing if you do not listen, Iain.
Wait. Where are you going?!
I am going to a place were the powers have no bearing. To a place where the mother is ruler and the gods are not permitted
In silence it is understood that the Hellspawn will follow, and the journey will take him back over the lands that he traveled before.
As days and nights pass, he will tread in the very same footsteps he made only days before, but no matter what his pace he is never able to come within an arm's length of his diseased love.
I have been patient. Where is this place you take me?
Patience is the reward of the dead. Follow me a few hundred steps more for the answer to your question.
Patience is the reward of the dead. Follow me a few hundred steps more for the answer to your question
In the clearing, on the other side of these woods, you will receive your answer

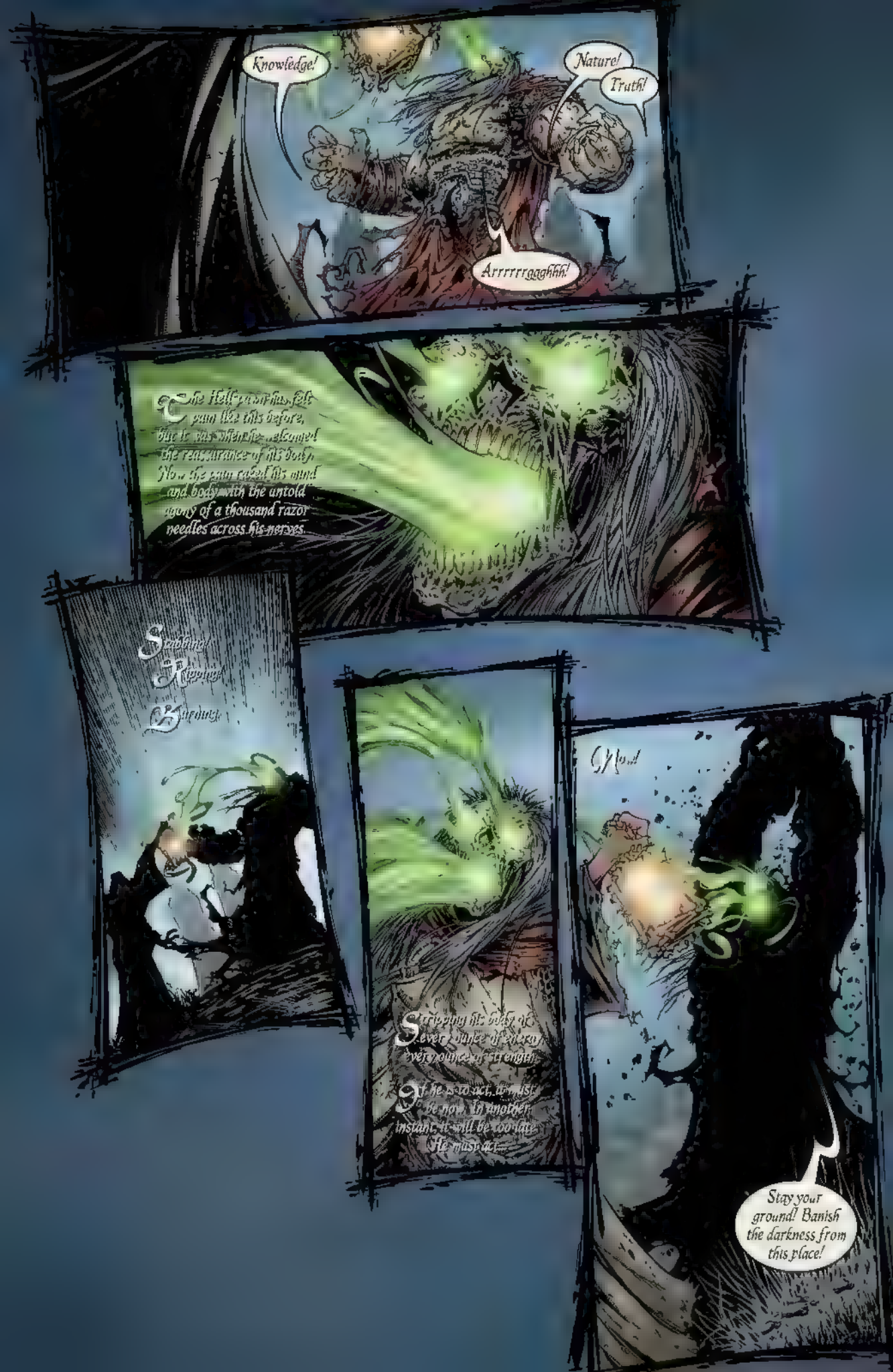
Come to me Iain. Come to me one last time
But he cannot resist her beauty. He has longed for her since he left her, to join the crusade and slaughter the infidel.
It was a painful death, Iain. The baby had to be taken from my body. I bled so badly
Shiann... I am sorry. I should have been there
I bled, and I bled, and I bled..
If he had walked away when he had the chance, perhaps it would have been spared an eternal death.
Cold and heat swirl through the crowd with solemn stride. The Hellspawn
I...I heard of your death. I wanted to be there.
Cold beneath the Hellspawn's feet. The ground suddenly frozen. He knows he should look up. He knows he should look away.
...and I bled, and I bled, and I bled...
Shiann!

Perhaps he would have been spared seeing her die again.
You have always blamed others for your plight. Perhaps when death comes for you again you will not be so quick to barter your soul. For as you are now, you are poison to the living, poison to the earth that supports you
But the Hellspawn did not heed the warning of his own flesh. The cold rushing up his spine. The heat vibrating in his brain.
What? Who?! Who's there?!
If only he had paid attention to his gut.
If only he had listened to his instinct he would have seen the truth behind the deceit.

He would have seen that on this day, Hellspawn, was tricked!
I cannot move my legs!
On this ground, on this night you have no power, beast

We have been watching you. It is time for you to be dispatched from this place to which you have brought nothing but torment.
Do you know who we are?
I have heard tales of your kind. You call yourselves the Druids.
Good. It is important that you know. My name is Gareth. I will be the administrator of your demise. It will be a tale told for eons through the lips of our ancestors. Do not fret. You will live on.
And what if I do not allow you to do this?
That is not a concern.
Can't move! What is this that you have done to me?!
It is the circle that binds you, creature. We are merely the conduits through which it acts.
We do not claim to know what you are beast, but we know from where it is you come and who you serve. You are a threat to all that is good and all that is righteous.

You are the violence in every man's heart. There is little we can do about the others, but you we can deal with. You we can dispatch
Ready the three candles.
I do not know what your plot is sorcerer, but I am not so easily killed as you might think.
You laugh at me! What is it that you find so amusing
We are not sorcerers. Far from it. We are one with our gods. And we have no intention of killing you. There are far worse destinies than death.
Mother and Father of the Otherworld, Underworld and Upperworld, hear our words. These are the three candles that illuminate each and every darkness...
...Knowledge...
...Nature...
...Truth...


Knowledge!
Nature!
Truth!
Arrrrrrrgghhh!
The Hell-prince has felt pain like this before, but it was when he welcomed the reassurance of his body. Now, the pain raped his mind and body with the untold agony of a thousand razor needles across his nerves.
Scrabbling!
Ripping!
Tearing!
Stripping all the body of every ounce of power, every ounce of strength.
If he is to act, it must be now. In another instant, it will be too late. He must act!
Now!
Stay your ground! Banish the darkness from this place!

Repeat the triad! Stop him! Stop him before the process is complete!
Knowledge!
Nature!

Tru-
Finish the triad I can not be the one to speak the final phrase!
You were quick to judge me and even quicker to cast me out! Tell me now what you think!
Finish the triad!
There's no one left, Druid There is no one left to aid you. Not your people nor your so-called gods.
My only regret will be that I did not succeed in ridding the earth of your poisonous presence. I am not afraid to die, creature.
Not afraid to die?
Then prepare to be extremely unafraid.

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Who are you to judge me. Who are you to sentence me to death or any other punishment.
In this we share a common bond, but still, you have proven that you mean me harm. You will die.
..t.., t...tr..
I am simply one with the earth and the powers. I have long suspected that your powers would attempt to interfere with our dimension, and this was to be a warning. A warning that we who live among the trees and the soil will not tolerate our earth being used.
I understand.
T..Truth!

Arrrrrrgggggghhhhhh! Noooooooooo!
The triad is complete! Illuminate the darkness and let it be cast out! Come into this prison and let the darkness be consumed!

W... what have you done?!
I have walked you out of the darkness. Where you stand now is your choice.
Feel this, Fiend!
Yaaahhh!
I am finished here.
Blood. Red blood. I am a man again. bleed.
No. You are still what you were when you stepped into the circle. I have merely removed that element which made you a threat. I don't know what you were. Of that I can only guess. What you will be is up to you.

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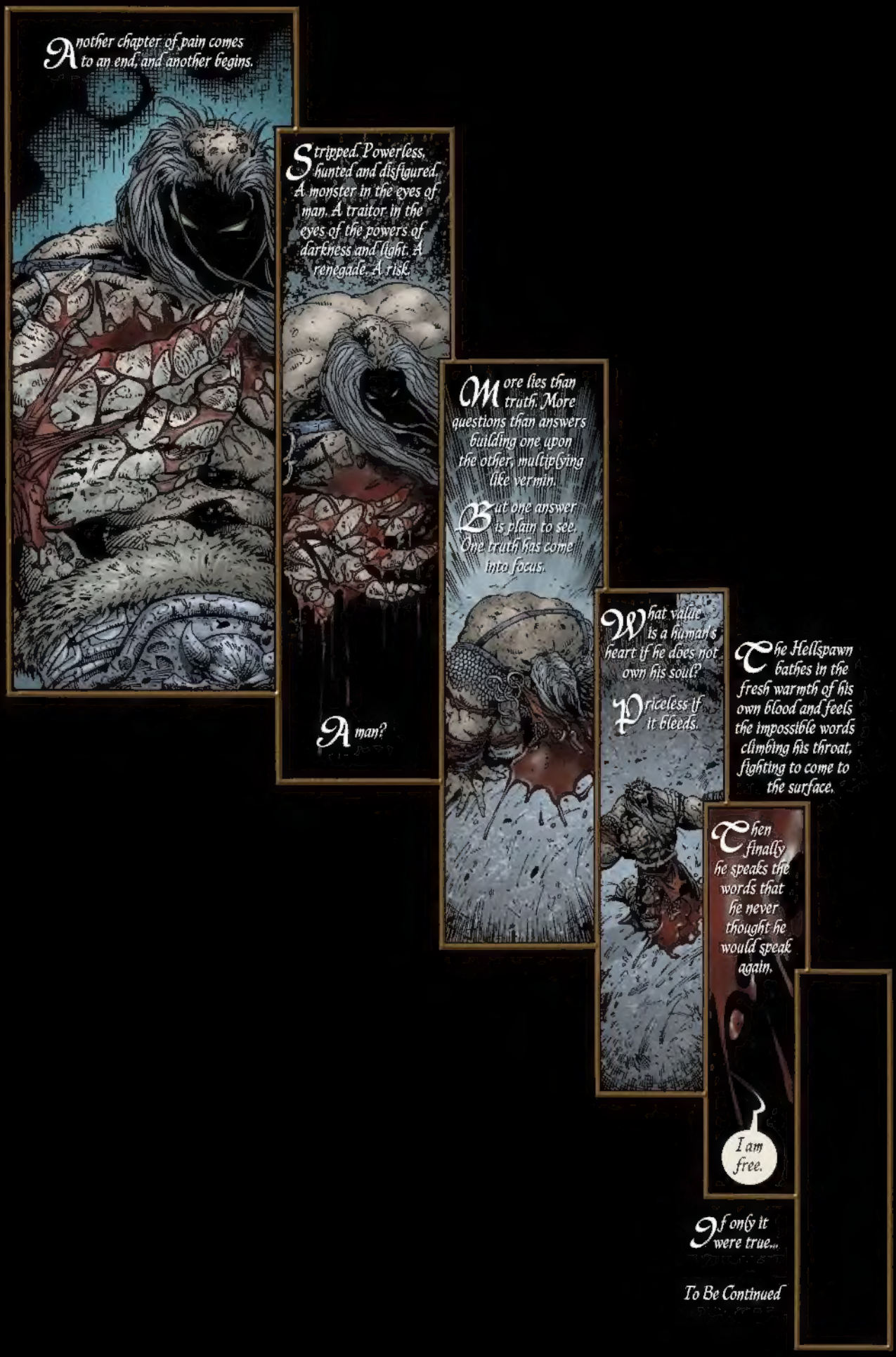
Another chapter of pain comes to an end, and another begins.
Stripped. Powerless, hunted and disfigured. A monster in the eyes of man. A traitor in the eyes of the powers of darkness and light. A renegade. A risk.
A man?
More lies than truth. More questions than answers building one upon the other, multiplying like vermin.
But one answer is plain to see. One truth has come into focus.
What value is a human's heart if he does not own his soul?
Priceless if it bleeds.
The Hellspawn bathes in the fresh warmth of his own blood and feels the impossible words climbing his throat, fighting to come to the surface.
Then finally he speaks the words that he never thought he would speak again.
I am free.
If only it were true...
To Be Continued

DARKNESS